

Always equipped with a strong sense of right and wrong, Mark thought of law enforcement as a calling. It was a job that suited him perfectly.

Mark joined Wake County's Sheriff's Department in 1976. I first knew him as the president of the local chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police, and he has championed the interests of rank and file law enforcement officers from that position since 1988. After serving with the Sheriff's Department for some 20 years, Mark's lifelong interest in politics spurred him to pursue a federal marshal appointment in the Clinton administration. It was a long, hard battle, but Mark showed characteristic stamina as the process dragged out for several years. When his nomination appeared indefinitely stalled because of partisan battles over Presidential appointments, President Clinton decided to use a rarely invoked recess appointment privilege, and Mark went on to be confirmed to a full term as U.S. Marshal for the Eastern District of North Carolina on May 24, 2000. There is no federal appointment that has given me more satisfaction, both because we worked on it so long and because Mark served with such dedication and distinction.

Mark was thrilled to be a part of the U.S. Marshals Service. He took security very seriously, working with local judges, Federal agencies, and my office to ensure that the courthouse was brought up to the standards for Federal judicial facilities. He also recognized that he had a responsibility to maintain good relations with the community. Taking on the role of an unofficial goodwill ambassador for the Marshals Service, Mark usually carried a deputy's badge in his pocket that he could award to a smiling child or interested citizen. When President Clinton left office, Mark returned to the beat in Wake County, going back to his roots and to the people who had long relied on his commitment to the job.

Mark was only the fourth officer to be killed in the line of duty in the Wake County Sheriff's Office's 71-year history, and the overwhelming response of his fellow officers makes clear how acutely they felt his loss. An entire community of law enforcement officers—from the DEA to the Marshals Service to local deputies—came together to find the person responsible, making an arrest within 48 hours. They said it was the least they could do for the deputy they described as "well-respected," "dedicated," and "a gentlemen, as well as a friend." Close to 1,500 people from law enforcement across the State attended his memorial service.

Mark leaves behind his loving parents, Dallas and Virginia Tucker, his wife Patricia, and sons Chad and Matthew. This tragedy has thrust the whole family into the media spotlight, and Patricia in particular has spoken of her husband and the circumstances surrounding his death with courage, compassion, and dignity.

Mark Tucker perfectly exemplified the dedication of our law enforcement community, and his death is a reminder of the risks these officers take for us every single day. But Mark was one of a kind, a unique combination—a cop's cop, a skilled political leader, an active and engaged citizen, a solid family man, a magnetic personality. His death is a great loss for the community, and we will miss him terribly. May we find comfort in the outpouring of affection and respect and gratitude that his memory has brought forth.

RECOGNIZING THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF CRISTINA VILLARREAL

HON. HILDA L. SOLIS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Ms. SOLIS. Mr. Speaker, today I rise to recognize Cristina Villarreal, a staff member who will be leaving my Washington, DC, office this week.

Cristina came to our office after graduating from American University to work as a staff assistant. She worked her way up to serve as a scheduler and as a legislative aide working on foreign affairs issues. Cristina has worked with me as we developed legislation (H. Res. 466) to call attention to the disturbing abduction and murder of hundreds of women taking place in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. H. Res. 466 conveys the sympathy of the U.S. House of Representatives to the families of the young women murdered in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, and encourages increased United States involvement in bringing an end to these crimes. Cristina also helped me organize a Congressional delegation to travel to Mexico to bring light to the over 300 young women who have been killed in Ciudad Juárez over the last decade. Cristina shares my commitment to bringing light to this human rights issue.

Cristina is beloved by her colleagues and will be missed by them. As Cristina moves on to pursue graduate education, I wish her the best of luck in her future endeavors.

THANKING COL. LEE FARMER FOR HIS SERVICE TO THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

HON. DARRELL E. ISSA

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. ISSA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor Colonel Lee Farmer for his service to the country for over 30 years in the United States Marine Corps. On March 4, Colonel Farmer will be retiring from the Corps, completing a career marked by dedication and excellence.

Colonel Farmer was commissioned as an officer in November 1973. Early in his career he served as a Rifle and Weapons Platoon Commander as well as the Executive Officer and Commanding Officer of Company A, 1st Battalion, 4th Marines. He remained with the Battalion as it became the first unit to initiate the unit Rotation Program, relocating to Twentynine Palms, Calif. There he served as a Rifle Company Commander for two years and was later assigned as the Staff Secretary of the 7th Marine Amphibious Brigade.

After graduating from the Amphibious Warfare School in 1982, Colonel Farmer served as Aide-de-camp to the Commandant of the Marine Corps. In July 1984 he was reassigned to the Basic School, Quantico, VA, where he eventually assumed command of Company A. He then attended Marines Corps Command and Staff College.

He later transferred to Okinawa, Japan, where he served as the Assistant Plans Officer to Marine Aircraft Group-36. Transferring to Camp Pendleton in 1987, Colonel Farmer

was later deployed to Southwest Asia and participated in Operation Desert Shield.

Following the war, he attended the Defense Language Institute in Monterey, California, in preparation for his two-year assignment to Chile where he attended the Chilean Naval War College. He was reassigned to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, at the Pentagon, in July 1993, where he worked counter-narcotics issues until his assignment as the Military Assistant to the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

Following this assignment, he returned to Camp Pendleton to command the School of Infantry. After leaving Camp Pendleton for another brief assignment in Okinawa, Japan, he again returned to Camp Pendleton, where he served as the Assistant Chief of Staff, Operations and Training until his reassignment as the Chief of Staff in May 2001.

Since Colonel Farmer assumed his role as Chief of Staff, he has worked closely with my office on a number of issues. Colonel Farmer has distinguished himself as an honest, sincere, and hard-working leader—ready to listen and always ready to help. During Colonel Farmer's tenure, Camp Pendleton has become one of our Nation's finest defense installations, training Marines who have served on the front lines of Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Camp Pendleton Marines are in the process of returning to Iraq, replacing the Army's 4th Infantry Division in the largest troop rotation in history. These Marines will now carry out a task that is critical to our national security and to the security of the entire Middle East. They have been prepared by the leadership of Camp Pendleton—Colonel Farmer and the commanding officers who serve alongside him. These leaders of Marines have good reason to be proud of their service.

It has been a pleasure working with Colonel Farmer. We are grateful for his distinguished service to our country. He will be missed.

MINORITY HOME OWNERSHIP AND THE WOW INITIATIVE

HON. DANNY K. DAVIS

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, February 26, 2004

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to address the importance of homeownership in our country; the difficulties that many Americans have becoming homeowners; and the financial strain put on Americans, particularly minorities, when seeking reasonable housing options.

Homeownership is an effective way for Americans to establish wealth and solidarity for their families. More should have the ability to pass homes from generation to generation, with the comfort and knowledge that home is more than a roof over one's head, but that home is a possession. Most consider purchasing a house a major investment, perhaps the largest that one will ever make, but to many it is more than an investment; it is the first step in achieving the American Dream. Families that own homes are entitled to an added sense of pride and a feeling of belonging to a neighborhood or community.

We should strive for all families to have the means necessary to become homeowners and